

Executive Department - State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy

MISSION

The State Commission on Criminal Sentencing Policy serves the citizens of Maryland by promoting fair and proportional criminal sentences without unwarranted disparity for all offenders with similar criminal histories committing similar offenses within a voluntary guidelines system providing judges probation, prison or corrections options. It also serves Maryland citizens by assisting understanding of actual time to be served by offenders and by protecting public safety through prioritizing the incarceration of violent and career offenders. In establishing the Commission, the General Assembly stated its intent that unwarranted sentencing disparities should be reduced; truth-in-sentencing policies should be promoted; prison capacity and usage should give priority to the incarceration of violent and career offenders; meaningful judicial sentencing discretion should be preserved; and sentencing judges should be able to impose the most appropriate criminal penalties for offenders.

VISION

A State where sentences are considered just by offenders and victims, well understood by the public and consistent with the State's voluntary guidelines; and individuals and communities possess knowledge and are empowered concerning crime and its effects on them.

KEY GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Goal 1. Minimal disparity in sentences of similar offenders sentenced for similar offenses.

Obj. 1.1 The Commission will review all guidelines for offenses to ensure proportionality and fairness in the ranking and classification of offenses.

Performance Measures	2011 Act.	2012 Act.	2013 Act.	2014 Act.	2015 Act.	2016 Est.	2017 Est.
Guidelines subcommittee meetings held	5	4	4	3	4	4	4
Commission review and vote on reclassification of offenses and timely submission to COMAR	2	2	3	1	3	2	2
Reports on compliance rates	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Statewide aggregated guideline compliance rate	79%	78%	76%	74%	75%	78%	78%

Goal 2. Improved rates of judicial compliance with the State's voluntary sentencing guidelines.

Obj. 2.1 Aggressive outreach and careful re-evaluation of criteria to improve compliance rates.

Performance Measures	2011 Act.	2012 Act.	2013 Act.	2014 Act.	2015 Act.	2016 Est.	2017 Est.
Guidelines subcommittee meetings held	5	4	4	3	4	4	4
Judicial review and training sessions held	14	5	4	13	10	8	8
Reports on compliance issued	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Percentage of (8) judicial circuits that met benchmark guideline	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

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Goal 3. Announced statements of time to be served by violent offenders when sentenced in circuit courts.

Obj. 3.1 Cooperation with the State Parole Commission in its ongoing efforts to obtain adherence by the courts to announce at sentencing that violent offenders are required to serve at least 50 percent of their sentence.

Performance Measures	2011 Act.	2012 Act.	2013 Act.	2014 Act.	2015 Act.	2016 Est.	2017 Est.
Judicial review and training sessions held	8	5	4	13	10	8	8
Percentage of violent offense cases with 50 percent of sentence announced	74%	66%	64%	64%	61%	80%	80%

Goal 4. Availability of corrections options as needed in participating local jurisdictions.

Obj. 4.1 Utilize inventory of available options, public support and support of action groups to improve knowledge of and incorporation of corrections options programs throughout the State.

Performance Measures	2011 Act.	2012 Act.	2013 Act.	2014 Act.	2015 Act.	2016 Est.	2017 Est.
Commission meetings/trainings held	4	3	4	2	4	4	4
Inventory of corrections options created/updated	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage of judicial circuits utilizing correctional options programs	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Goal 5. Address the increased proportion of inmates considered violent or career in State prisons.

Obj. 5.1 Support for adoption and implementation of corrections options programs to supplement its current structured sentencing system.

Performance Measures	2011 Act.	2012 Act.	2013 Act.	2014 Act.	2015 Act.	2016 Est.	2017 Est.
Commission meetings/trainings held	4	3	4	2	4	4	4
Public hearing meetings held	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Inventory of alternatives to incarceration available Statewide	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Reports with statistics on proportion of inmates by general offense type (person, property, drug)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1